

**Town of North Smithfield Planning Board
Kendall Dean School, 83 Green Street
Thursday, April 5, 2012**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

1. Roll Call

Present: Chair Lucien Benoit, Dean Naylor, Gene Simone, Alex Biliouris, Art Bassett, Mali Jones. Absent: Gene Currie. Also present was Town Planner Bob Ericson.

2. Approval of Minutes: March 22, 2012

Mr. Simone made a motion to approve the minutes of March 22, 2012, as corrected. Mr. Bassett seconded the motion, with all in favor.

3. Review of proposed zoning ordinance amendment to Section 6.19, Regulation of groundwater aquifer zones, groundwater recharge areas, wellhead protection areas and water supply basin with possible votes or other actions on consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and other recommendations

Dr. Caroly Shumway of the Ordinance Development Committee presented information from Lorraine Joubert of URI regarding the

percentage of impervious coverage in watershed areas.

Mr. Ericson stated that the Board should consider the percentage of impervious coverage to be permitted by the Town. Mr. Biliouris stated his concern with limiting the impervious coverage to 25%, since currently the Zoning Ordinance allows for 25% building coverage. Adding in parking and other impervious coverage would take lots over 25% and limit development opportunities. Mr. Ericson noted that manufacturing zones currently allow 40% building coverage.

Dr. Shumway reviewed the new materials, stressing that the Town should strive to have less than 5% impervious coverage in aquifer districts. If the impervious area is increased beyond 10%, the quality of the drinking water will decrease significantly.

The Board discussed having a goal of 25% impervious area overall, with that goal balancing areas of much lower impervious area with those of more than 25% impervious area. Chairman Benoit also stated that the ordinance should include provisions for the consideration of new technologies. For example, in the future water filters may be available that can protect the drinking water in areas with more impervious area.

Mr. Ericson stressed that Dr. Shumway is addressing only the area in the aquifer zone, not the entire town. He also pointed out that in some areas, such as the Brickle complex in Branch Village, there is sufficient backland to the property so that the land can be developed,

and the 25% impervious area goal can be achieved.

Mr. Naylor asked about the requirements in areas zoned business highway (BH) within the water supply basin areas. Dr. Shumway stated that there is a proposal in the Comp Plan to change some BH zones to residential zones in order to help the drinking water supply. Mr. Naylor asked what impact BH has compared to other zones. Dr. Shumway stated that this information would be available at the next meeting. Mr. Naylor asked for information on the drinking water given many different levels of impervious coverage (25%, 40%, 60%, 80%). Mr. Ericson stated that maximum site development usually means 85% coverage. The Board agreed to continue the discussion when the new information is available.

The Board will continue its review and discussion of the proposed amendment at the April 19, 2012 meeting.

4. Review of proposed zoning ordinance amendment to Section 6.13-6.15, Parking and Loading with possible votes or other actions on consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and other recommendations

Mr. Ericson led the Board through a review of the proposed amendment to Zoning Ordinance, Section 6.13 through 6.15. The Board discussed concerns with the proposed changes. One issue discussed was the fact that parking needs are dependent on the type

of business use. For example, a retail store would need more parking per 1,000 SF than an accountant's office.

The Board discussed provisions for compact car parking, but Mr. Ericson recommended leaving this out of the ordinance. Many different size cars use compact parking, thus defeating its purpose. They also discussed angled parking and reduction of aisle width, in order to provide more parking in the same area.

The Board also discussed whether the minimum parking requirements at educational institutions were excessive. Some believed they were, but Ms. Jones stated that there are often many people besides teachers who park all day at the elementary schools, such as teacher assistants and parent volunteers.

Another area of concern was the storage of trailer pods on residential property. This is currently allowed, and the Board discussed changing this, by adding "storage trailers" to Section 6.13, along with "commercial vehicles and construction equipment."

Mr. Ericson stated that the ordinance, as submitted to and reviewed by the Planning Board, is compatible with the Comprehensive Plan, as it minimizes impervious area and protects groundwater, but advised the Board to discuss their concerns and present their recommendations for amendments/possible changes to the Town Council at the future public hearing.

Mr. Naylor made a motion that the Planning Board finds the proposed zoning ordinance amendment to Section 6.13-6.15, Parking and Loading, as referred to the Board, to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Bassett seconded the motion, with all in favor.

5. Recommendation on Cherry Brook sub-watershed: Stormwater management options.

Mr. Ericson discussed an aerial overview and LIDAR contour map. The mapped locations are just north of 104 (Greenville Road) and west of 146. The land includes 69 acres, mainly wetlands, donated to the Town by the Silva Estate. The main culvert for the Cherry Brook southwest sub-watershed runs under Route 146, and there are four smaller equalizing culverts. Using the maps as reference, Mr. Ericson showed the Board the area of the property that could be used as a detention area by placing flashboards in front of the culverts. This would keep excess stormwater from going into the rest of Cherry Brook and flooding the Meadowbrook residential subdivision that has had a long history of flood problems. A hydrological study is necessary to see if this is feasible. The cost would be approximately \$35,000, but there is no grant money available for this study. The Board agreed that they should recommend that the Town Council proceed with this study and approve funding.

Mr. Biliouris made a motion to have Mr. Ericson write a letter to the Town Council, stating that the Planning Board urges the Town Council to sufficiently fund a hydrological study of Cherry Brook watershed that would allow detention use of the Silva land. Mr. Simone seconded the motion, with all in favor.

6. Land Development and Subdivision Regulations: Discussion of possible LD&SR revisions: Article V: Design Standards

Mr. Ericson stated that he had not received any recommended changes from any of the Board members. Mr. Currie has some suggestions, but he was not present at this meeting. Mr. Ericson said that he had discussed Zoning Ordinance Section 17 with Mr. Nadeau. Article V depends on Section 17, but the 2006-2007 Town Council never finally approved it.

Mr. Naylor stated that he had been working on reducing Article V to an outline, which is easier to follow and shows that it is not set up logically, and that there are many areas of duplication within the section. He will send his outline to Mr. Ericson, who will forward copies to the Board for their review and comments.

7. Planning Update: Review of current events

Mr. Ericson gave the Board a quick update on current Planning issues. Town Clerk Deb Todd needs to create Town redistricting

maps, and the state's consultant proposed to do it for \$11,000. Bobbi Moneghan will do it instead on our GIS.

Mr. Ericson gave the Board members printed copies of a street overlay priority list that he received from the DPW.

The RI Office of Energy Resources (OER) recommended North Smithfield to the United States Department of Energy (DOE) for participation in the new national Better Buildings Challenge (BBC). This will give the town visibility on the BBC website and DOE's national conference. The BBC is a real economic development opportunity. Corporate participants include Nissan, Kohl's and Staples. The goal is to reduce building energy consumption by 20% between 2010 and 2020. If our base year is 2010, the town is well on its way, with the BBC providing access to free technical assistance.

The Chair asked about any updates available on a wind turbine at Dowling Village. Mr. Ericson stated that it is still being discussed, but that it will be about two months before anything will be ready to present to the Town Council.

Mr. Biliouris made a motion to adjourn at 9:23 pm. Mr. Bassett seconded the motion, with all in favor.

Submitted by Angela Pugliese, 4/11/12